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March 1984

Berkeley, California

Volume 66

THE GULL

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY



THE MARCH PROGRAM: BIGHORN SHEEP

Dick Weaver, a 34 year veteran of the Dept. of Fish and Game and a man largely responsible for the prospering desert bighorn herds in California, will share his extensive knowledge about Desert Bighorn Sheep at the March meeting.

Temperatures in Mojave Desert canyons often soar above 120° on midsummer days. The Desert Bighorn Sheep has adapted to survive and thrive in this dry, seemingly inhospitable environment.

In the fifties when Weaver first began to inventory water sources in the Mojave ranges, maps showed only vague range boundaries. Dick Weaver has hiked through all the Mojave's 60 ranges. Other DFG biologists call him "a true 20th century explorer."

Audubon members are encouraged to bring their friends, and the public is invited. This meeting will be Thursday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley.

— PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Saturday, Mar. 3 - San Pablo Reservoir.

Sunday, Mar. 4 - San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge. See the Gull for Feb.

Sunday, Mar. 11 - Tennessee Cove. This will be a two-mile walk to Tennessee Cove, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to look for land and shorebirds, including White-throated Swifts. From San Francisco, from Hwy. 101 take the Hwy. 1 exit toward the Mill Valley and Stinson Beach exit. In about a quarter mile turn left onto Tennessee Valley Rd. Meet at the end of the road at 9 a.m. Bring lunch. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020). (✓)

Wednesday, Mar. 14 - Mini-trip to Mitchell Canyon. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 24 through the Caldecott Tunnel. At Walnut Creek take Ignatio Valley Rd. Go about five miles, turn right on Mitchell Canyon Rd. and go to the parking lot at the end of the road. This is a delightful area with easy streamside walking and many songbirds. Leaders: Delpha de Timofeev and Ruth Voss (535-8932).

Saturday, Mar. 17 - San Francisco Bird Blitz. Participants in last year's blitz saw over 100 species within the city limits. This year's mad dash to build up the biggest "City Day List" possible will begin at 7 a.m. sharp at the parking lot at Middle Lake near 41st Ave. and Lincoln Way. From there we will caravan to other sites which include Sutro Baths, Lake Merced and Candlestick Point. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk when we will adjourn to a nearby restaurant where for a minimal cost we can avoid going home to cook dinner. Please call Alan by Mar. 10 if you plan to join us for dinner. Leader: Alan Hopkins (585-5669). (✓)

Saturday, Mar. 24 - Sunol Regional Park. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the park entrance. Take I-680 south, turn off Calaveras Rd. (the freeway sign is marked Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84. Go south (left) and follow signs to Sunol Park, about five miles. Bring lunch and liquids. Park regulations prohibit alcoholic beverages. We should see Golden Eagles, a variety of winter residents and early spring migrants. Leader: Peter Allen (981-7199). (✓)

Sunday, Mar. 25 - Sutro Heights, San Francisco. Meet at 9 a.m. at the visitors' center at the Cliff House. We will bird the area around the Cliff House and Sutro Heights. We will be looking for seabirds around Seal Rock and landbirds in the area near the Cliff House. This trip is recommended for beginners. Leader: Naomi Svenningsen (538-6233).

Saturday, Mar. 31 - Coyote Hills Regional Park and San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the visitors' center. From

Hwy. 17 exit at Jarvis Ave. and go north on Newark Blvd., or from Alvarado West exit go to Newark Blvd. and turn south, follow the signs to the park. During the morning we will bird Coyote Hills. After lunch we will caravan to the SFBNWR to see the exhibits at the visitors' center and look for birds in the area. Bring lunch, liquids and a scope if you have one. In case of rain, please call the leader.

Leader: Paul Covel (530-2513)(✓)

Saturday, Apr. 7 - Bothe-Napa State Park. This is a particularly beautiful park in the spring, with migrating warblers and vireos, Winter Wrens, wildflowers and, if we are lucky, Pileated Woodpeckers. We will walk about four to five miles and will bird mostly by ear. This trip is especially good for beginners. From the East Bay take I-80 north, turnoff to Napa following Hwy. 29 to St. Helena. The entrance to the park is on your left just past the Old Bale Mill north of St. Helena. From the West Bay, take Hwy. 101 north to Hwy. 37 near Novato, go east to the junction with Hwy. 121 (turn left at the junction) and follow 121 north and east to Napa where it joins Hwy. 29. Continue northwest to the park. Meet at the parking lot at 8 a.m. Bring lunch and liquids. There is a day use fee. Rain cancels trip. Please carpool if possible. Leader: Gene Hull (525-3893). (✓)

Sunday, Apr. 15 - Bodega Bay for spring migrants. Meet at 9 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 1 and East Shore Rd. (½ mile north of Deikmann's Bay Store. We will bird Bodega harbor, Bodega Head and possibly Salmon Creek. Pack a bag lunch to eat at Conzett's "Tilt City" where landbirds abound in the spring.

If you come up on Saturday, lodging is available at the Best Western Motel (707-875-3525) and there are nice campsites at the Dunes State Park just north of our meeting place. Plan to get there early to be sure of getting a spot, or call Ticketron to reserve one. Leader: Nancy Konzett (527-2593, Kensington; 707-875-2231, Bodega Bay) (✓)

NOTE FROM THE COMMITTEE: Beginners are always welcome on GGAS field trips. Leaders and participants are eager to introduce people to this activity which we all enjoy. From time to time the committee plans trips especially for beginners. These trips will generally go to nearby areas to see resident species.

Sunday, Mar. 18 - Beginners' Trip to Tilden Regional Park. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Nature Center parking lot. From I-80 take University Ave. until it ends at Oxford and turn left. Take Oxford to Rose and turn right one block and turn left onto Spruce. Continue until the intersection with Grizzly Peak and take Wildcat Canyon Rd. Take the first left and follow the signs to the Nature Center parking lot.

This trip will concentrate on identifying birds of the chaparral, woodland and grassland areas of the Park. We will see a variety of resident and breeding species and will listen for their sounds as an aid to identification. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Rain or a serious threat of rain cancels trip. Leader: Robin Pulich (848-3594, evenings).

Sunday, Apr. 1 - Beginners' Trip to Five Brooks, Bolinas Lagoon and Audubon Canyon Ranch. Meet at 8:30 at the Five Brooks parking lot (about three miles south of Olema on Hwy. 1). We will look for early spring mi-

grants near the pond, then caravan to Audubon Canyon Ranch with stops along Bolinas Lagoon. Bring your lunch and we will picnic at the Ranch (\$1 contribution). After lunch we'll walk up to the overlook to see the nesting herons and egrets. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Leader: Gloria Markowitz (892-2910). (✓)

Carpooling arrangements can be made for trips marked (✓). Call Kate Partridge at 236-9053 and leave message. She will call you.

Problems: If for any reason you have difficulty getting in touch with a field trip leader or need information regarding a trip, call Shirley Kelley, (387-8290) or the GGAS office (843-2222).

— FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

January Observations — through Jan. 29

Surprise! A dry Month!

TUBENOSE PELAGICS

A first year **Short-tailed Albatross** followed a boat about 40 miles west of Pt. Sur Dec. 2 or 4 (RLP). This could be the most-wanted bird in California listing. SE Farallon's first Laysan Albatross appeared Dec. 7. It seemed to have a sore wing, probably due to the windstorm four days earlier (PR-BO).

Nearly all the shearwaters off Monterey Bay were Short-tailed. The first annual Monterey Bay pelagic Christmas Count Dec. 29 encountered 110 (99 in the Count area), including a pure flock of 56 (SFB, SA, mob). More startling was the discovery that the storm-petrel flock still existed five miles off Moss Landing on this date. We estimated 600 Black storm-Petrels and five Ashys (SFB, AB, mob). A dying white rumped storm-petrel found on Rodeo Beach Nov. 13 proved to be a Leach's (CC, GL, et al.).

WATERFOWL

A **Whooper Swan** near Grimes, Colusa Co., Jan 17-19 (CZ, TB, BM, mob) didn't stay long enough for most birders. Although generally assumed to be California's first wild Whooper Swan, it may be a local free-flying aviary bird. This possibility is being investigated. All species of geese and swans common in the Central Valley were unusually well sprinkled along the coast and around the Bay throughout the period (mob). Gray Lodge Refuge hosted a quarter million Snow Geese, of which at least six were "Blue" morph (BED, fide TB). I doubt that we've ever had a better sample from which to estimate the color morph ratio in the Valley. However, this count of six may have included the "Blue" morph **Ross' Goose** seen at Gray Lodge Jan. 1 (SH JML, et al.). A high count of seven Eurasian Wigeons was obtained there the same day (JML, et al.).

A male apparent hybrid Tufted Duck x Lesser Scaup found Jan. 16 remained 15 miles east of Lodi through the month (DY, JML, et al.). At least seven Harlequin Ducks were reported, with all those south of Sonoma Co. being singles: SE Farallon (PRBO), San Rafael (DJ, et al.), Fort Funston (LE), Moss Landing (mob), and Monterey Peninsula (mob). Oldsquaws were finally more widely found. In addition to the one wintering at Berkeley Pier (mob), individuals were at Bodega Bay (LCB, RH), at the west end of the San Rafael Bridge (DJ, et al.), at the Richmond end of the same bridge (BR) and at the east end of the Bay Bridge (SW). The largest concentration of Barrow's Golden-eyes was 27 near the San Rafael Bridge in Richmond Jan. 8 (BR). The Smew remained in Foster City throughout the month (mob).

OTHER WATERBIRDS

The Red-necked Grebe stayed on the Foster City lagoon (mob), and two were far inland on Lake of the Pines, north of Auburn, Jan. 2 (JML, et al.). Lone Cattle Egrets were reported from five locations around the Bay Area (mob) and a flock of 35 was at Colusa National Wildlife Refuge Jan. 29 (CS, SG). A White-faced Ibis was at Elkhorn Slough Jan. 1-2 and about 12 were at Colusa National Wildlife Preserve Jan. 16 (SS). A Sandhill Crane continues to be seen between Inverness and Point Reyes Station (mob).

Two Lesser Golden-Plovers are wintering at the Lodi Sewage Ponds (DY). A Solitary Sandpiper discovered Jan. 22 wintering just south of Inverness (DS, mob) is Northern California's first at this season. Evidence is accumulating that last summer's consensus "Rufous-necked Stint" was actually California's first Little Stint (fide JM). A Rock Sandpiper recurred at Pebble Beach, south of Pescadero, Jan. 29 (PG). A peak count of 820 Red Phalaropes passed SE Farallon Dec. 2 (PRBO), the day before the big storm that deposited hundreds inland. Both the Little Gull and the Common Black-headed Gull remained at the Stockton Sewage Ponds throughout the month (DY, et al.).

LANDBIRDS

A Broad-winged Hawk was found in Carmel Valley Dec. 30 (JML), and one at Lake Merced was seen through Jan. 20 (LE). The Costa's Hummingbird in San Rafael survived at least to Dec. 31 (CF). An adult male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (eastern form) was well described from the Napa River Ecological Preserve Jan. 10 (MB). Strybing Arboretum's "Red-naped" Yellow-bellied Sapsucker lingered into January and another was found

at Phoenix Lake, Marin Co., Dec. 31 (IT).

The Eastern Phoebe is back for another winter in Monterey's El Estero Cemetary (mob). An unseasonal Barn Swallow was at Bolinas Sewage Ponds Jan. 22 (DS). Many lingering "half-hardy" landbirds were found, of which the eight House Wrens at Stinson Beach Dec. 31 (RS) was a notable concentration. The most coastal Mountain Bluebirds were on SE Farallon Island Nov. 26 (PRBO), in Tilden Park Jan. 18 (NC) and near Abbot's Lagoon Jan. 21 (KW). Two Townsend's Solitaires were on Mt. Diablo Jan. 21 or 22 (LS, MB) and another was on Mt. Tamalpais Jan. 28 (IT). The **Wood Thrush** in Golden Gate Park was seen intermittently throughout the month (mob). A Sage Thrasher is wintering in Walnut Creek (MW, mob).

A late Tennessee Warbler visited SE Farallon Dec. 16 (PRBO). The host of warblers located on the Monterey Peninsula Christmas Count Dec. 30 included a Tennessee, 2 Nashvilles, a Yellow, several Black-throated Grays, a Palm, three Black-and-whites, a Northern Waterthrush and a Wilson's (mob), but the female **Black-throated Blue Warbler** in Carmel Valley (JML, mob) topped them all. It is only the second to be found in Northern California during winter. Two Palm Warblers were at the south end of Corte Madera Marsh Dec. 29 (NB), but six were reported there two days later (fide DSi). Other Palm Warblers were at Lake Elizabeth in Fremont Jan 6-7 (AH, et al.) and at North Lake in Golden Gate Park Jan 23 (PG). The male Black-and-white Warbler was refound at Stinson Beach Jan. 22 (DW) and another Black-and-white resided at the San Francisco Zoo (HW, et al.) A **Worm-eating Warbler** was reported in San Francisco Jan. 17 (PT).

The male Summer Tanager remained in Golden Gate Park through January (KH, CMC). Three Western Tanagers were together in Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula Count Dec. 30. A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was between the Archery Range and North Lake in Golden Gate Park in early January (RS). The Indigo Bunting that stopped at SE Farallon Nov. 29 was very late. An American tree Sparrow visited the island Jan. 8 (PRBO). The Lark Bunting along West Butte Rd. was seen intermittently through Jan. 19 (mob). One Sharp-tailed Sparrow was seen at Pine Creek Gulch through Dec. 31 (CG, et al.) and one was belatedly found at Palo Alto Baylands Jan. 16-17 (mob). One and two Swamp Sparrows were seen at these two sites, respectively, at the same times (GC, et al.; JML, et al.). Birders found other Swamp Sparrows at Lake Hennessey Dec. 28-29 (MB), Doran Park at Bodega Bay Jan. 1 (DB) and two south of Inverness Jan. 29 (AG, WG). A Fox Sparrow of an eastern race toured SE Farallons Dec 17 (PRBO). A Harris' Sparrow was at San Francisco Zoo in mid January (LB). Two Lapland Longspurs were still at Hayward Regional Shoreline through Jan. 14 (JG, JJ) and one was at Doran Park Jan. 1 (DB).

Apparently three Yellow-headed Blackbirds visited our urban lakes: male at Lake Merritt Jan. 5 (DK), female at south end of Lake Merced Jan. 2 (LE), male (?) at north end of Lake Merced Jan. 27 (Mrs. JM, fide CH). The three "Baltimore" and one "Bullock's" Northern Orioles in Pacific Grove on the Monterey Peninsula Count were not only all together but they also shared the eucalyptuses with the three Western Tanagers mentioned above! Up to nine Evening Grosbeaks inhabited College of Marin to Jan. 3 (DT). Twelve Red Crossbills

frequented the trees east of the Archery Range in Golden Gate Park Jan. 2-14 (mob).

Observers: Steve Allison, Stephen F. Bailey, Alan Baldridge, Luis Baptisa, Dennis Beall, Ted Beedy, Murray Berner, Laurence C. Binford, Neil Blank, Bill Bowsman, Bob Bradley, Meredith Bush, Tom Castro, Graham Chisholm, Cris Christenson, Nancy Konzett, Cira Marie Curie, Bruce E. Deuel, Lee Elias, Carter Faust, Gary Fellers, Albert Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Doug Gomke, Peter Gotschling, Steve Granholm, Jeff Greenhouse, Kem Hainebach, Ray Hasey, Shawn Hayes, Charley Hines, Alice Hoch, Judy Jardin, Dick Johnson, Dick Kaufman, Bill Keener, Jerry Langham, Wendy Leiber, Gail Lester, Ray Lewis, many observers (mob), Bruce Maxwell, Mrs. James Moran, Joseph Morlan (JM), Fran Nelson, Roy Nelson, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (Farallon report thanks to Harry Carter and Harriet Huber), Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Robert L. Pitman, Dave Quady, Elsie Richie, Bob Richmond, Jean Richmond, Shelly Sack, Laura Sanden, Karen Sander-son, Dave Schuford (DS), Dianne

Sierra (DSi), Larry Silver, Rich Stallcup, John Sutake, Chris Swarth, Patrick Sweeney, Ron Thorn, Irene Timmosi, Dorothy Tobkin, Pat Triggs, Ed Vine, Margaret Wadsworth, Bruce Walker, Harry White, Katherine Wilson, David Wimpfheimer, Grant Winslow, David Yee, Cathy Zedaker.

—STEPHEN F. BAILEY,
Observations Editor

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DO YOU LIKE THE CHANGE?

The new logo and layout are the contribution of former editor Nancy Konzett. The changes are meant to liven up **The GULL**, and your comments are solicited. The change to a smaller type will increase the content per page, a saving in paper and postage costs. The drawings in this issue are also by Nancy Konzett.



THE BACK YARD BIRDER

You have no doubt noticed that certain species of birds in your yard are less wild, less afraid of you, than others. One reason their innate wariness has been broken down is that you have made food, water and shelter available. Some birds are just plain curious. In my yard the friendlier, or less fearful, are the Anna's and Allen's Hummingbirds, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Wren-tit, Brown Towhee, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Plain Titmouse, House Finch, Robin and Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

There is a great variance in tameness among species, e.g. American Robins breeding remote forests are much more shy than their suburban relatives. On the other hand, because they have no human contact, many species of the Galapagos Islands and other remote places are fearless. These are mainly seabirds, grouse, owls, shorebirds, crows, tits, kinglets, waxwings and "winter finches". Depending on your point of view, they are friendly tame or stupid.

Offering food can often overcome shyness as evidenced by the ease with which one can tempt birds to take food from his hand. Or, consider the gulls who board boats at sea for food, birds who follow a farmer's plow, who nest over a well-used door or jays who raid a camp-site.

Over the years, birds have come to recognize their natural enemies. This wariness must be passed down somehow, genetically or by learned behavior. In areas where certain birds are hunted, a person on horseback can approach much closer since the bird doesn't see the horse as an enemy. Also, if humans resemble their natural predators, birds will demonstrate innate fear, (e.g. apes of the rain forest often consider birds a great delicacy.)

A nesting bird may appear tame because it won't budge from its nest if you come near, in some cases allowing itself to be touched. Or, parent birds may bravely attack an intruder. Obviously this is defensive behavior rather than tameness or fearlessness.

There are numerous instances of birds who seek out and seem to enjoy human contact, literally begging to be stroked. This can probably be explained as an urge to preen and to be preened, called allopreening or mutual preening. I would assume this aids in the taming of hawks for falconry.

I have mixed feelings about taming wild birds to feed from the hand. The birds become somewhat dependent on one, they learn to trust humans and not all humans can be trusted (!), and being so close to human habitation they risk becoming a meal for a neighborhood cat. Still, there is a great thrill in having a chickadee alight on your fingertips to take a sunflower seed or a shelled walnut. It's the closest thing to catching a moonbeam.

—MEG PAULETICH

NEW IN THE LIBRARY

In the past several months the GG-AS Library has acquired a number of new books that may be borrowed by members.

It's not too early to start planning a Birding vacation this spring or summer, and we have the latest James Lane guides to Churchill (Manitoba), the Rio Grande Valley, the Texas Coast, Florida, Southeastern Arizona, and Southern California to help plan your route. We also have current editions of HAWAII'S BIRDS, issued by the Hawaii Audubon Society, and Robert Armstrong's NEW EXPANDED GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF ALASKA, if either of these interesting

states is your goal. For those going farther afield (and those who merely like to dream), Peter Alden's **FINDING BIRDS AROUND THE WORLD** describes 111 choice destinations, from the Pribilofs to New Zealand, with lots of the birds to be expected in each. A useful cross-reference index at the end tells the person in search of any specific bird to go to find it.

The birds of Galapagos and of East Africa are depicted in guides by Michael Harris and John G. Williams, respectively. And those planning an oceanic cruise will learn what to look for in Gerald Tuck's **A GUIDE TO SEABIRDS ON THE OCEAN ROUTES**.

Don't forget your binoculars!
—CHRISTINE JONES
GGAS Librarian

FREMONT BIRDING CLASSES

A one-day trip to some of San Francisco's loveliest parks and best birding spots will be led by **Alice Hoch**.

Sponsored by the Fremont Adult School, the trip is on Saturday, **Mar. 10** from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at a cost of \$10.50. Students must pre-register at least five days before the trip. Send a check or go in person to the School, 4700 Calaveras Ave., Fremont CA 94538.

Another of **Alice Hoch's** classes, "Field Birding" will start **Feb. 28**. It will stress field identification, life styles and ecology of local birds during trips to different places each Tuesday through **Apr. 3**.

Registration will be at the first session. Be prepared to bird that morning. The class meets from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Adult School. For more information call the school (791-4841) or the instructor (657-0475).

SPRING BIRDING CLASSES

Dr. Stephen F. Bailey will offer two GGAS sponsored courses through the Albany Adult School.

Spring Songs will use a new approach to learning bird songs: field trips first, followed by classroom review and comparison sessions employing recorded songs and bird slides. Three Saturday morning field trips will each be followed by a Tuesday evening class (7-9:30 p.m.) The course starts with a brief orientation 7 p.m., **Mar. 27**. Enrollment will be limited.

Big Day - Birdathon Workshop is a new course on how to plan and conduct an effort to find as many birds as possible on a single day, for sport or to raise money for causes such as Mono Lake or PRBO. Students will participate in planning and critiquing Big Day itineraries. The analytical approach to bird habitat coverage should improve planning any kind of birding. Five Wednesday evenings (7-9 p.m.) starting **Mar. 28**. An optional Big Day planned by the class group will be offered if interest is sufficient.

For information call Steve at 548-9507.

ALAMEDA BIRDWALKS

Six **Tuesday** morning birdwalks are offered by the Alameda Recreation Dept. starting **Mar. 27**, led by GGAS past - president Patricia Boese, the walks are planned to introduce beginners to close-to-home birds of gardens, parks and the Bay shoreline. The fee is \$20. For information phone 522-4100, ext. 227 or 339-8374.

NATURE SOUNDS SOCIETY

The Nature Sounds Society will hold its first meeting. This will be at SF State University **Saturday, Mar. 17** at 2 p.m. Host for this meeting is the Biology Dept.'s Avian Studies Group. Dr. Robert I. Bowman will speak on "Evolution of Song in Darwin's Finches". The group will meet in the Blaklee Room, 10th Floor, Thornton Hall.

The new society will be interested in the educational use of sounds including bird identification, field of amateurs with researchers studying sounds in animals and natural sounds and their application for music. It is sponsored by the Library of Natural Sounds of the Oakland Museum's Natural Sciences Dept. The telephone number for further information is 273-3884.

SF BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

National Wildlife Week will be the occasion of special events, hikes, van tours, slide shows and demonstrations. At Coyote Hills Regional Park 10 a.m. to noon on Sunday, Mar. 18 and all day on Saturday and Sunday at the Wildlife Refuge. Call (415) 792-0222.

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

UCLA Extension, LA Dept. of Light & Power, and the Mono Lake committee co-sponsor **Mono Lake: Beyond the Public Trust Doctrine**. March 30 and 31, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Holiday Inn Bayview Plaza, Santa Monica. Fee will be \$70 and covers two lunches. Write UCLA, P.O. Box 24901, Los Angeles CA 90024.

COOPER SOCIETY RESEARCH SEMINAR

Everyone interested in birds is invited to a research seminar by Dr. Tim Manolis on **Monday, Mar. 5** entitled "Factors Influencing Host Choice in the Shining Cowbird". Coevolution between this neotropical brood parasite and its hosts was an important and fascinating topic of his Ph.D. research. The seminar will be in Room 2503, Life Sciences Bldg., UC Berkeley at 8 p.m., preceded at 7:30 by a business meeting of the Northern California Chapter, Cooper Ornithological Society.

ASILOMAR AGAIN

Audubon's WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE is here again. Apr. 14-17 at the Asilomar Conference Grounds. The 1984 theme is Water and Wildlife, with panel discussions, displays and workshops. If you want to learn the latest about western refuges, wildlife and water issues, plan now to attend. Registration forms are available at the GGAS office or from Audubon Regional Office, 555 Audubon Place, Sacramento, CA 95825.

MERRITT COLLEGE

A SHORT COURSE, FIELD STUDIES PROGRAM is offered in biology, geology, and environmental studies which may appeal to people with limited free time. They consist of several week-day evening introductory lectures followed by weekend field study. Also included is a series of one-day field trips in the Bay Area. Phone Earth Sciences at 531-4911, ext. 2600 or write Sanford Ohren, Earth Sciences, Merritt College 12500 Campus Dr. Oakland, CA 94619.

NATURE EXPLORATIONS

The following are offered by nature Explorations - Tuleyome:

Mar. 24 Elkhorn Slough for migrating birds with Bernadette Palmer. Cost \$10 adult, \$5 youth \$21 family.

Mar. 31 Point Reyes for an Owl Prowl with Don Schmoldt. Cost \$14 adult, \$8 youth.

Apr. 1-6 Death Valley with Lee Main. Cost \$127.

Telephone 324-8737 or write to Nature Explorations, 2253 Park Blvd. Palo Alto, CA 94305.

PRBO

NATURAL EXCURSIONS

SPRING IN THE CALIFORNIA DESERTS, Anza Borrego, Apr. 15-20 and Mojave Desert Apr. 23-28. Two six day natural history trips to explore the remote regions of these arid lands. Instructors Jules Evans and Michael Ellis will follow the seasonal and ecological transition of the deserts in search of migrating birds and blooming wildflowers. \$135 PRBO members, \$145 non-members includes camping arrangements.

BREEDING BIRDS OF PALOMARIN, Apr. 27 (evening) and Apr. 28. Dave DeSante, landbird biologist, will teach about the fascinating and complex behavior of the landbirds at Palomar Field Station at the south end of Point Reyes National Seashore. How do birds choose mates and breeding territories? Which species and individuals are most successful? How does weather affect breeding success? \$25 PRBO members, \$30 non-members includes overnight accommodations at Volunteer Canyon. Co-sponsored with Audubon Canyon Ranch.

Phone 868-1221 or write PRBO, 4990 Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here are some tasks that need a few good women or men to step forward and take on:

TELEPHONE ANSWERING — Can you give a morning or an afternoon each week (or more) to answering the phone in the GGAS office? Many inquiries come in by phone. The help of a receptionist would free the director to concentrate on other tasks, but she would be available to take the calls that require her attention and to back up the volunteer with information and help. Why not give it a try?

TYPING and COMPUTER OPERATION — At hours to be arranged, to type correspondence and/or enter data into the office computer. Skill as a typist is needed, training on the computer is available. To use the computer to produce reports, mailing labels and action alerts.

Please give Hillary a call at 843-2222 and talk it over.

RESIGNATIONS

It is with regret that the Board accepted the resignations this month of two veteran supporters of the Audubon Society. Miss Minnie Groshong, Corresponding Secretary, and Miss Maybelle Groshong, Membership Chairman. Their work with the chapter began with their retirement from the Federal Forestry Division, about ten years ago and each has contributed a great many hours of devoted service.

The gap will be felt, and volunteers who might be interested are asked to telephone the office of Dan Murphy, chapter president, at 564-0074.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Saturday, Mar. 3 marks the opening of Audubon Canyon Ranch for the 1984 season. "The Ranch" is our own sanctuary on the shore of Bolinas Lagoon. It preserves the breeding habitat for Great-blue Herons and Great Egrets atop the redwood grove in Picher Canyon. Though you can glimpse the heronry from the ranch yard there is nothing more exciting than taking the quarter mile hike up the hill to the observatory where you can look down directly into the nests. For those who like to hike there are two beautiful trails through oak woodlands, redwood forests and grasslands. Though hiking is excellent, I seem to have trouble getting away from the ranch yard. The museum exhibits trace the natural history of man in the same area.

The picnic area is one of those places that requires a special lunch. Peanut butter and jelly just won't do. In fact, if you have a favorite picnic recipe which is special enough for a day at "the Ranch", send it to me at the GGAS office (2718 Telegraph Ave. #206, Berkeley, CA 94705). We will publish the best of them in *The Gull* for June. That is the month when GGAS volunteers will be your hosts at "the Ranch".

Do join us at Audubon Canyon Ranch this spring. It will be open weekends from March 3 until July 4. For a special treat stop in during the week prior to Easter (Tuesday to Friday). Hours are 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. To reach "the Ranch" from the south take Hwy. 1 to Stinson Beach on continue north about three miles. From the north take Sir Francis Drake Blvd. west to Hwy. 1 at Olema, then go south to Bolinas Lagoon, continue south for about a mile. Bring someone special and share the Audubon Canyon Ranch experience with a friend.

—DAN MURPHY

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

As it has for more than twenty years, Audubon Canyon Ranch opens its gates again in March. Weekdays and holidays it will welcome more than 20,000 visitors in the four months it is open.

Marin Audubon will act as hosts for the month of March; Karen and Skip Schwartz will be in attendance as hosts and lecturers. The public is welcome to the meadows, the trails and heronry overlook.

The nature sanctuary and education center is sponsored by four Bay Area Audubon Chapters-Golden Gate, Marin, and Sequoia. With facilities at three distinctive environments: Bolinas Lagoon with the slopes of Mt. Tamalpais, Tomales Bay with beaches, marshes and uplands; and Sonoma foothills with coastal woods, chaparral, creeks and waterfalls, it offers rich experiences to birders and other wildlife lovers.

Ranch biologist Ray Peterson offers classes on spring weekends (see *The Gull* for Feb.) The telephone number is (415) 383-1644.

—CLIFFORD ONLY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor;

An out-of-character sighting: On Jan. 29 while watching an Anna's Hummingbird sipping nectar from the feeder which hangs outside my kitchen window, I was amazed to see a chickadee alight on the opposite perch, stick its bill through the feeding hole and drink happily the sugar water for about three minutes. Then the chickadee pursued its normal search for bugs in the rafters of the porch overhang. A midget sapsucker in disguise?

Sharon Gumz
Kensington

OAKLAND CHRISTMAS COUNT

This year's count was solidly successful despite low participation. At 176, total species for this year compares favorably with the ten-year average of 173, while 148,895 individual birds is down about seven per-cent from the average (despite being the highest in seven years!). We fielded only 152 observers (lowest in eleven years), 27 of whom were at least part-time feeder-watchers. No species were unique to feeder-watchers this year, but they did find 1767 birds of 51 species, at 24 sites (up one site from last year). A large drop in total party-hours this year reflects poor participation; 309 hours is only two-thirds average, but with this we can see the number of birds found per hour of searching was 482, compared to an average 331. The birds and weather certainly were cooperative! One species was dropped from the tentative total; after deliberation I concluded that my own report of a Black-legged Kittiwake, based only on a brief (even if convincing) look by a single observer and representing such an unusual record, was best deleted from the final report.

Several improvements will be made in future counts based on what I learned this year, and I look forward to any suggestions or criticisms you have. A more detailed overview of the count soon will be available in a Summary and Analysis I'm sending to all Area leaders; it is available to others by sending \$1 (payable to GG-AS) to me at P.O. Box 268, Cotati, CA 94928 (note my new address).

—KURT CAMPBELL

SAN FRANCISCO CHRISTMAS COUNT

December 21, 1983 marked the renewal of the San Francisco Christmas Count. The count was reported annually in *The Gull* from 1927 until it was abandoned for lack of interest in 1962. The count team, Shirley Kelly, Alan Hopkins, Donna Lion and Dan Murphy determined a circle with the required 15 mile diameter could just fit on the northern part of the San Francisco peninsula. With the support of the local birding community, and the financial backing of GGAS we established an exciting "new" count.

It was an amazing success. Seventy-five participants, about 25 more than we expected for a mid-week count, observed 161 species and 42,893 individuals. Among the remarkable birds were Wood Thrush, "Red-naped" Sapsucker, Broad-winged Hawk, Golden Eagle and Steller's Jay (a first for Golden Gate Park in 25 or more years). A Rufous-crowned Sparrow was a first San Mateo record. Our species list seemed more a fall list for Point Reyes than an early winter day in the City. Species seen in the count area during the count period, but not on count day: Peregrine Falcon, Barn Owl, **Rose-Breasted Grosbeak**.

—DAN MURPHY

In the tables which follow, the Oakland and San Francisco Christmas Bird Counts are reported in detail. Observed high numbers and rare species are shown in boldface type and asterisks indicate unexpectedly low counts and comments.

1983 CHRISTMAS COUNT REPORT

Species observed	Oakland	S.F.
Red-throated Loon	110	81
Arctic Loon	39	57

	Oakland	S.F.		Oakland	S.F.
peep sp.	80		Plain Titmouse	136	
sandpiper sp.	181		Bushtit	2143	361
Short-b. Dowitcher	226	150	Red-br. Nuthatch	134	79
Long-b. Dowitcher	641	1	White-br. Nuthatch	31	
dowitcher sp.	1073		Pygmy Nuthatch		345
Common Snipe	9	9	Brown Creeper	32	29
Red Phalarope	7		Rock Wren	1	
Bonaparte's Gull	312	38	Bewick's Wren	141	24
Heerman's Gull	8	49	House Wren	2	
Mew Gull	451	2221	Winter Wren	44	53
Ring-billed Gull	731	202	Marsh Wren	12	82
Ca. Gull	386*	925	wren sp.	8	
*(low)			Golden-cr. Kinglet	158	202
Herring Gull	32	23	Ruby-cr. Kinglet	736	449
Thayer's Gull	5	13	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher		2
W. Gull	1579	1579	W. Bluebird	148	
W. x Glauc.-w. Gull	1	2	Hermit Thrush	171	105
Glaucous-winged Gull	888	559	Wood Thrush		1
gull sp.	3714	482	Am. Robin	5151	770
Forster's Tern	35	32	Varied Thrush	119	63
Common Murre		12	Wren Tit	359	80
Rock Dove	1065	2970	N. Mockingbird	69	16
Band-t. Pigeon	260	28	Ca. Thrasher	32	
Mourning Dove	1087	683	Water Pipit	100	11
C. Barn-Owl	4		Cedar Waxwing	452	105
W. Screech-Owl	1		Loggerhead Shrike	96	12
Great Horned Owl	28	7	European Starling	4111	885
Burrowing Owl	13		Hutton's Vireo	65	24
Short-eared Owl	2		Tennessee Warbler		1
N. Saw-whet Owl	4		Orange-cr. Warbler	4	15
White-th. Swift	25		Nashville Warbler		1
Anna's Hummingbird	403	409	Yellow Warbler		3
Belted Kingfisher	20	13	Yellow-rumped Warbler		
Acorn Woodpecker	5		(type?)	748	1618
Yellow-b. (Red-n.) Sapsucker		1	(Myrtle)	29	111
Red-b. Sapsucker	19	3	(Audubon's)	169	663
Nuttall's Woodpecker	36	2	Black-th. Gray Warbler	1	
Downy Woodpecker	24	38	Townsend's Warbler	19	136
Hairy Woodpecker	2		Hermit Warbler		3
N. Flicker	344*	138	Palm Warbler		2
*(2 not Red-s.)			Black-and-white Warbler		2
Black Phoebe	91	93	Am. Redstart		1
Say's Phoebe	20	22	C. Yellowthroat	12	42
Horned Lark	30	10	Summer Tanager		2
Steller's Jay	415	8	W. Tanager		1
Scrub Jay	644	78	Rufous-sided Towhee	307	15
Am. Crow	82	9	Brown Towhee	931	221
Common Raven	5	14	Rufous-cr. Sparrow	8	1
Chestnut-b. Chickadee	810	299	Lark Sparrow	12	

	Oakland	S.F.
Savanah Sparrow	168	28
Fox Sparrow	255	327
Song Sparrow	343	304
Lincoln's Sparrow	18	3
White-th. Sparrow	4	4
Golden-cr. Sparrow	1282	578
White-cr. Sparrow	1271	1486
sparrow sp.	5	
Dark-eyed (slate-c.) Junco	3	
Dark-eyed (Ore.) Junco	1926	1008
Red-w. Blackbird	685	100
Tri-colored Blackbird	25	28
W. Meadowlark	465	159
Brewer's Blackbird	1103	2060
Great-tailed Grackle		2
Brown-headed Cowbird	40	31
blackbird sp.	161	
N. (Bullock's) Oriole		3
Purple Finch	50	13
House Finch	1216	1139
Red Crossbill		33
Pine Siskin	685	43
Lesser Goldfinch	132	1
Am. Goldfinch	48*	2
*(low)		
goldfinch sp.	15	
House Sparrow	679	746

Total individuals	148,895	42,893
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Total Species	173	161
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APRIL MEETING GGAS

The April meeting is to be held at the Raptor Rehabilitation Center, SF Zoo. It will feature demonstrations with live birds of prey. Save Thursday, April 12.

WILDLIFE ART BENEFIT

The Wildlife Art Benefit brought in the amount of \$1350.

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Portraits from Galapagos, photo exhibit by Santa Cruz photographer Larry Minden, continues through May 28.



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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RARE BIRD ALERT (recorded) 843-2211

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Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$6 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.